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THE INDEBTEDNESS OF THE WEST
TO NEW ENGLAND

ADDRESS

OF

CHARLES W. FAIRBANKS

AT THE

TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

FOUNDING OF LANCASTER, MASS.

JUNE 30, 1903

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Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen — With pleasure I have come to participate with you in this interesting historical occasion, and to bear testimony of our gratitude to New England for what she has been, and is, to the West. I do not feel as though I had come among strangers, or “enemies,” to use a phrase which has had much currency upon the hustings, for the ashes of many of my ancestors rest in your soil. They were among the pioneers who aided in raising the torch of liberty upon the Atlantic coast, and they were among those who carried beyond the Appalachian mountains the fundamental principles of human freedom which were inculcated here.

We meet, not as strangers, but as friends, filled with the love of liberty, and with pride in a common ancestry. We are bound together by a common heritage, a common kinship, a common aspiration and a common destiny.

We return to New England with filial affection. We look to her as to a venerable mother, wise, noble-minded and generous-hearted. She may have seemed exacting and austere in her early days, but she has mellowed and sweetened with age. If she has faults they lean to virtue's side. We recognize and gladly acknowledge our everlasting indebtedness to her for the high ideals which the pioneers carried hence to their humble homes in the West. They took with them the love of religion, the love of learning, the love of home. These have been the inspiration of the West. They have been the sure foundation of her development from small beginnings to her present strength and power.

I rejoice with you in the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the municipal birth of Lancaster. Two and one-half centuries are but a brief period, compared with the lives of some of the European municipalities, but it is a long time when compared with most of our American cities, with the national Government, and with the eldest of our States. It

is vast, indeed, when contrasted with the development and growth of the West.

This old town, about which cluster so many splendid memories, has witnessed all that is most memorable and glorious in American history. She began before our fathers had awakened to the mighty possibilities of the Western continent; before there was any dream of Lexington and Concord; before Philadelphia and 1776; before there was any thought of Bunker Hill and before any seer foresaw Yorktown. To write the history of the country since the charter of Lancaster is to write the most inspiring and luminous story in all human experience. In her modest way, through it all, she has borne well her part. It is not for me to dwell upon the story of her career, although it is most engaging. Orators and poets and historians have long dwelt upon it, and it is all as familiar as a thrice-told tale.

Where is the East and where is the West? Who is able to delimit them upon the map of our country so that we may know where the one ends and the other begins? Our modern development is such that we lose sight of geographical divisions. We have blended together into one vast homogeneous community, and it is impossible to mark a boundary to the East or the West, the North or the South. The time was when these general divisions had a significance they do not now possess. The North and the South were sharply divided by a curse; but with the priceless blood of the heroic youth of the republic it was washed away forever. In the elder days the West was not far from the Atlantic seaboard, but our Western frontier has pushed farther and farther until the West and the Middle West have become the East within the lifetime of many who are here. The old maps have become obsolete, and the old East and the old West are but traditional divisions.

In the years that are passed, a time within the memory of many who honor this historic occasion, there was a well-defined East and an equally well-

defined West. There was a line on one side of which were years, wealth, culture and conservatism, and on the other youth, small capital, some culture, a high order of intelligence, and bold enterprise.

The East and the West, now somewhat vague generalizations, are not composed of people of different bloods, of divergent racial tendencies, but they are of the same blood; of the same races. They have kindred sympathies and like aspirations. Their sons laid down their lives upon the battlefields of the South, to preserve for the present and future ages our sacred institutions. They, together, yielded up the last measure of their devotion, to vindicate the national honor in the war with Spain—a war which humanity commanded, and which drove across the sea the Spanish flag, which had, for so many centuries, contaminated the air of the Western hemisphere.

Though many years have intervened since the early pioneers of the East took up their march westward, into the unbroken and hostile wilderness, we have not been divided. We have been brought continually into closer communion. The bonds of attachment have grown steadily stronger. "The mystic cords of memory," of which the immortal Lincoln, of New England ancestry, spoke, have stretched from many an humble hearthstone in the great Mississippi Valley and beyond, to the old homes in far-off New England.

New England's sons, who have been an important part of the progress of the West, and who are to be found in every neighborhood, stretching westward three thousand miles to where the Pacific breaks upon the western shores of our continent, and beyond even that, wherever American enterprise has established dominion, have an affection for Plymouth Rock and Fanueil Hall, and for Lancaster and for her sister towns.

The West was fortunate in having back of it such an East—an East filled with patriotic memories, with

lessons of heroic devotion to home and country, an East which has been, and which is today, the pride of America.

The soil of New England reluctantly yielded a livelihood, and no drone or spendthrift could make his way here. A forbidding soil and a severe climate were not hospitable either to ignorance or indolence. Out of the earnest contest with nature came a splendid civilization, which, when transplanted to the broader and richer fields of the West, resulted in a development and growth which challenge our admiration and command unstinted commendation everywhere.

The sons and daughters of New England carried into the West their love of liberty, their devotion to republican institutions, their frugality, their indomitable pluck, which defied adversity. If you would know how we have so splendidly won our way, I would point you to these influences in answer.

The West is indebted, as is the entire country, to New England for many patriots and statesmen whose lives and example are part of the imperishable glory of the republic. From our earliest days until now the stories of their lives have been daily told about the fireside, and no one can measure the impetus thereby given to higher and more patriotic effort. What were American history without them? With the most illustrious stand many of the sons of Massachusetts. Among those upon the roll of honor are Bradford, Endicott and Winthrop, Otis, the Adamses, and Hancock, Webster, Andrew Daves, and Sumner, Devens, Hoar, Long, Lodge, and Moody. Her contributions to the world of letters have been no less conspicuous, and have brought her high and lasting renown. Prescott and Motley, Emerson, Longfellow, Lowell, Whittier and Bryant have become familiar names wherever the English tongue is spoken.

Among those whose patriotic fervor we are pleased to acknowledge, is one who honors this interesting

event. His name will long endure in the pure patriotic literature of the republic. It has been my good fortune to be associated with him during a tragic and forever memorable period of our national history. He differed with many of his associates on important matters of governmental policy, but it was an honest difference, a difference that all respected and honored. His voice has always rung out clear in support of exalted principles, which his conscience commanded. He has brought us many messages which have burned with the patriotic fires of James Otis and Samuel Adams. We all gratefully bring the homage of our love and esteem, and lay it at the feet of your great Senator, George F. Hoar.

There can be no doubt that among the most distinctive contributions to the West by the East, were the Ordinance of 1787, and the Ohio Company. The vast influence of the Ordinance of 1787 upon the West, and upon the nation itself, will justify a somewhat special inquiry into the movement which led to its adoption, and to the formation of the Ohio Society.

Congress, in 1776, made an appropriation of lands to the officers and soldiers of the army. The distribution of lands to those who served during the war was to be made according to their several grades. A private soldier was to receive one hundred acres; a lieutenant-colonel, four hundred and fifty, and so on. Later, Congress provided that a brigadier-general should receive eight hundred and fifty and a major-general one thousand one hundred acres.

After the army of Washington had accomplished its high and immortal mission, two hundred and eighty-eight of his officers and soldiers turned their eyes westward. In June, 1783, they petitioned Congress to have the lands which had been voted to them, located in that "tract of country, bounded north on Lake Erie, east on Pennsylvania, southeast and south on the River Ohio, west on a line beginning at that part of the Ohio which lies twenty-four miles west of

the mouth of the River Scioto, thence running north on a meridian line until it intersects the River Miami, which falls into Lake Erie, thence down the middle of that river to the lake."

The petitioners further expressed the opinion that this country is "of sufficient extent, the land of such quality, and situation such as may induce Congress to assign and mark it out as a tract or territory suitable to form a distinct Government (or colony of the United States), in time to be admitted one of the confederated States of America."

Of the signers, more than one-half were from the State of Massachusetts. The remainder were from the States of New Jersey, Connecticut, Maryland, New York and New Hampshire.

The petition was put into the hands of Gen. Rufus Putnam, of Massachusetts. It set forth the advantages to the entire country of the establishment of such a colony.

"I am, sir," said he, "among those who consider the cession of so great a tract of territory to the United States in the western world as a very happy circumstance, and of great consequence to the American empire. Nor have I the least doubt that Congress will pay an early attention to securing the allegiance of the natives, as well as provide for the defense of that country in case of a war with Great Britain or Spain.

"One great means of securing the allegiance of the natives, I take to be," said he, "the furnishing them such necessaries as they shall stand in need of, and in exchange receiving their furs and skins. They are become so accustomed to the use of firearms that I doubt if they could gain a subsistence without them, at least they will be very sorry to be reduced to the disagreeable necessity of using the bow and arrow as the only means for killing their game, and so habituated are they to the woolen blanket, etc., that an absolute necessity alone will prevent their making use of them. This consideration alone is, I think, to

prove the necessity of establishing such factories as may furnish an ample supply to these wretched creatures; for unless they are furnished by the subjects of the United States, they will undoubtedly seek elsewhere, and like all other people, form their attachment where they have their commerce, and then, in case of a war, will always be certain to aid our enemies. Therefore, if there were no advantages in view but that of attaching them to our interest, I think good policy will dictate the measure of carrying on a commerce with these people."

He suggested a general chain of garrisons for the protection of the frontier from the Ohio to the lake.

"The petitioners, at least some of them," said he, in conclusion, "conceive that sound policy dictates the measure, and that Congress ought to lose no time in establishing some such chain of posts as has been hinted at, and in procuring the tract of country petitioned for, of the natives, for the moment this is done, and agreeable terms offered to the settlers, many of the petitioners are determined, not only to become adventurers, but actually to remove themselves to this country; and there is not the least doubt but other valuable citizens will follow their example, and the probability is that the country between Lake Erie and the Ohio will be filled with inhabitants, and the faithful subjects of these United States, so established on the waters of the Ohio and the lakes as to banish forever the idea of our Western territory falling under the dominion of any European power, the frontier of the old States will be effectually secured from savage alarms, and the new will have little to fear from their insults."

General Putnam speaks in his petition of "the faithful subjects of these United States," a term with which the citizens of the new republic had become quite familiar while they were subjects of Great Britain; a term, however, which has long since, happily, become obsolete. The loyal citizen has succeeded the faithful subject. The one is the stay and

support of republican institutions; the other, of monarchy.

The petition of General Putnam discloses the fact that the petitioners, or at least some of them, were much opposed to a monopoly of lands, and wished to guard against large patents being granted to individuals, as in their opinion such a mode would be very injurious to the country, and would greatly retard its settlement, as it would throw too much power into the hands of a few.

George Washington gave his cordial assent to the plan of colonization, because "it would connect our governments with the frontier, extend our settlements progressively, and plant a brave, a hardy and respectable race of people as our advanced post, who would be always ready and willing (in case of hostility) to combat the savages and check their incursions. A settlement formed by such men would give security to our frontiers; the very name of it would awe the Indians, and more than probably prevent the murder of many innocent families, which frequently in the usual mode of extending our settlements and encroachments on the hunting grounds of the natives, fall the hapless victims to savage barbarity. * * *

I will venture to say it is the most rational and practicable scheme which can be adopted by a great proportion of the officers and soldiers of our army, and promises them more happiness than they can expect in any other way. The settlers being in the prime of life, inured to hardship, and taught by experience to accommodate themselves in every situation, going in a considerable body and under the patronage of government, would enjoy in the first instance advantages in procuring subsistence, and all the necessities for a comfortable beginning, superior to any common class of emigrants, and quite unknown to those who have heretofore extended themselves beyond the Appalachian mountains. They may expect, after a little perseverance, competence and independ-

ence for themselves, a pleasant retreat in old age, and the fairest prospects for their children."

A meeting of the officers and soldiers of the Revolutionary war was held in 1786, in Boston, pursuant to a call by Gen. Rufus Putnam and Benjamin Tupper, to organize the Ohio Society. At this meeting the Ohio company of associates was organized. Its purpose was "to raise a fund in Continental certificates for the sole purpose of buying Western lands in the Western territory and making a settlement."

Dr. Manasseh Cutler, of Massachusetts, was employed, in 1787, "to purchase of Congress land for the company in the great Western Territory of the Union," and the purchase of 1,500,000 acres was effected under an act of Congress, which was passed in July of that year.

What an important year that was in American history! Seventeen hundred and eighty-seven will forever mark some of the most important and notable incidents in our national history. In addition to the purchase of land by the Ohio company, our national constitution was framed, and the Ordinance for the government of the territory northwest of the Ohio river was enacted in that year. The Ohio purchase and the Ordinance of 1787 were interdependent incidents. It has been said that "the purchase would not have been made without the Ordinance; the Ordinance could not have been enacted except as an essential condition of the purchase."

The Ordinance was next in importance only to the adoption of the Federal constitution. It was an act in the fullest sense of constructive statesmanship. It was among the foremost in its scope and wisdom in all the history of free government. What higher praise than that given it by Mr. Webster? "We are accustomed," said he, "to praise the lawgivers of antiquity; we help to perpetuate the fame of Solon and Lycurgus; but I doubt whether one single law of any lawgiver, ancient or modern, has produced effects of

more distinct, marked and lasting character than the Ordinance of 1787."

"It approaches as near to absolute perfection," said Judge Timothy Walker, "as anything to be found in the legislation of mankind."

It has been said that it laid the foundations of national greatness.

To whom are we indebted for this incomparable Ordinance? To whom shall we pay the tribute of our grateful appreciation for this notable achievement in statecraft, so potent and far-reaching in its beneficent influence, not only upon the great Northwest, but upon the entire nation? We must look to New England for the author, and we must also look to the pulpit for the one who laid us all under grateful contribution. The one to whom we are largely indebted was a graduate of Yale College; a man of high culture, "and a member of divers philosophical societies. At that time he was pastor of a church in Massachusetts," Dr. Manasseh Cutler.

Dr. Cutler gives an interesting account of the difficulty of securing from Congress the lands acquired by the Ohio company. "By this Ordinance," he informs us, "we obtained the grant of near 5,000,000 of acres of land, amounting to three millions and a half of dollars, one million and a half of acres for the Ohio company, and the remainder for a private speculation, in which many of the principal characters in America are concerned. Without connecting this speculation, similar terms and advantages could not have been obtained for the Ohio company."

It would appear from this that the art of "log rolling," which has sometimes been practiced in the West, finds its precedent in the early practices of our virtuous fathers of the East.

The Ordinance of 1787 prohibited slavery in the Northwest Territory. An effort had been made before its adoption to restrict the existence of slavery in that Territory to the year 1800. Such an ordi-

nance was reported by Mr. Jefferson's committee in 1784, but the restrictive clause was stricken out.

The Ordinance forever secured the Territory of the Northwest, and, through force of example, the territory beyond, from the crime of human slavery. Its soil has never been contaminated by the foot of a bondman. Its vast domain has been in the fullest sense the home and habitation of the free. And when the question of abolishing slavery in the United States arose, its sword was tendered to wipe from our institutions the great overmastering crime, the one relic of barbarism, which unfortunately gained a foothold in a land dedicated by God Almighty to the exalted cause of human freedom.

Senator Hoar, speaking with historical accuracy and characteristic grace, at Marietta, Ohio, in 1888, said:

"Here was the first human government where absolute civil and religious liberty always prevailed. Here no witch was ever hanged. Here no heretic was ever molested. Here no slave was ever born or dwelt. When older States and nations, where the chains of human bondage have been broken, shall utter the proud boast: 'With great cost I obtained this freedom,' each sister of the imperial group—Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin—may lift up her queenly head with the yet prouder answer: 'But I was free born!'"

Who can imagine the condition of the Northwest, or that of the country itself, if slavery had been permitted to gain a foothold in the Northwest Territory? If it had ever taken root in that large domain, the probabilities are that the historian of the future would write a far different story of our country than he will now be able to record. We know all too well the tremendous cost of tearing from the throat of liberty the merciless clutch of slavery.

The authors of the Ordinance kept in view the necessity of ample provision for "schools and academies." It was, indeed, a fortunate and wise fore-

sight which made ample provision for the establishment of "moral and educational influences" in conjunction with provisions for securing and safeguarding "human rights." They did not believe the support of the public schools was paternalistic and inimical to the public welfare. They well regarded the system as fundamentally sound and promotive of the best interests of society and of the Government itself. To this wholesome provision we are indebted for many schools and colleges throughout the West, which are doing a mighty work in the advancement of our common interests.

"This Ordinance did that which was not so common," said Mr. Webster. "It set forth and declared it to be a high and binding duty of government itself to support schools and advance the means of education, on the plain reason that religion, morality and knowledge are necessary to good government and to the happiness of mankind."

The Northwest Territory, when the Ordinance of 1787 was established, was essentially a wilderness. It extended from the Alleghany mountains to the Father of Waters, north of the Ohio. From an early day it had been regarded of great promise. The climatic condition, soil and mineral resources, lakes and rivers were such that those who reflected saw there a future of exceptional promise. Richard Cobden predicted in 1835 that there "one day will be the headquarters of agriculture and manufacturing industry. Here one day will center the wealth, the power, the civilization of the entire world."

If this generous prophecy shall be fulfilled it will be due not only to our natural advantages, but it will be owing, in no inconsiderable degree, to the Ordinance of 1787, and to the fact that running through the texture of our civilization is the strong thread of New England gold—conservatism, wisdom and patriotism.

Out of the great Northwestern Territory, five powerful and majestic States have been carved—Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin. Their

combined population is about sixteen millions, or some five times more than the population of the Union when the constitution was adopted. They have but fairly entered upon a career which is destined in a large measure to verify the prediction of the great English statesman.

We have sometimes heard it said by the passionate and unreflecting that there will be no more trouble between the North and the South; that they are indissolubly cemented together, and that if any domestic division shall occur, it will be between the East and the West; that the line of cleavage, if it shall come, will run north and south. Such sentiment is not well founded. It is contrary to good reason, for there is no natural antagonism of interest between the East and the West. Their interests are entirely mutual. They are concerned in a mighty commerce which flows back and forth between them, and which binds them firmly together. They are of the same blood. They have the same churches, kindred ideals and like aspirations. Those who conceive that there may be a conflict between them in the great future, see with the disordered vision of pessimists.

Fate has decreed, and her decrees are forever irreversible, that we shall dwell in perpetual unison. Political demagogues, for selfish ends, and senseless agitators, can not disturb the ties which bind us together with more than a Titan's power. I am not unaware of the force of the subtle appeal to local pride and local self-interest, and local prejudice, but this would be lost in our larger pride and our larger interest in our great national development.

Many of the constitutions of our Western States are largely modeled upon those of the East. Many of our laws and municipalities have been fashioned after yours. What is best in yours we have freely adopted. We have appropriated that which has seemed best to promote the cause of American freedom.

We have built mighty highways of commerce. Some of them stretch across the Mississippi Valley, the Western plains, through the Rocky mountains to the Pacific coast. We have erected great industries and have joined with the States of the Atlantic seaboard in establishing the industrial supremacy of our country. Much of the capital for these gigantic and far-reaching undertakings came from the Eastern States. You manifested in full measure your faith in your sons of the West, and we trust that our development is a full justification of the confidence you reposed in us.

New England was founded by those who were enamored of freedom and who desired to secure liberty for themselves and their posterity. They placed the schoolhouse and the church side by side. These were the essential and permanent foundations of free institutions. They were carried into the West by the pioneers, who made their tedious and arduous way across the Appalachian chain to found new States. The New England church and schoolhouse were the companions of the log dwelling upon the frontier, and they have continued down to this hour, like mighty beacon lights, "casting afar the beams of a higher civilization."

We have many years studied the rich literature of New England. Your statesmen, publicists, historians, poets, novelists and scientists have long been familiar to us. Many of our young men and women have been instructed in your colleges and universities. We are indebted to Harvard and Yale, and to Dartmouth, of which Mr. Webster spoke with such pathetic interest, for their splendid influence upon the minds of many of our youth. They have been potent agencies in the education not only of the East but of the West.

We have great centers of industrial activity, populous cities, mountains, rivers and lakes, forests and mines of inestimable wealth. We take pride in them, but they are not the trophies we most prize. They go

to make up our material assets which have received attention the world over, but they are not our chiefest claim to distinction. We value most the virtue and intelligence and patriotism of our people. We seek wealth and power, not as the end of human ambition, but only as a means to the end. We seek them only that we may advance knowledge and the gentler qualities which are the flower and fruitage of the human race. We seek physical power because it may advance our moral and intellectual well-being. We desire it only because we may use it to advance wisdom and charity. We regard an exalted, symmetrical personality as the end, rather than the erection of factories, the development of farms, or the construction of far-reaching highways.

In these higher things we seek to emulate New England. We have drawn from you ideas of "clean-thinking and clean-living," the bedrock of contentment in the home, the essential predicate of wholesome social conditions. We have received from you culture, scholarship, patriotism and morality. With them no people can be either small or mean, and without them none can become truly great and strong.

The gifted Curtis, an honored son of the East, speaking of the far-reaching influence of New England, said:

"It is the subtle and penetrating influence of New England which has been felt in every part of our national life, as the cool wind, blowing from her pine-clad mountains, breathes a loftier inspiration, a health more vigorous, a fresher impulse upon her own green valleys and happy fields. See how she has diffused her population. * * * The blood of New England flows with energizing, progressive power in the veins of every State; and the undaunted spirit of the Puritan, *sic semper tyrannis*, animates the continent from sea to sea."

While we have received much from you—Omnipotence alone can measure it—we have not been con-

tent with that. We have used it as capital for making still larger gains in the common interest. What you have given us has but stimulated our efforts to still larger advancement. We have used what we have received at your generous hands as a stepping-stone to greater things. We have made headway in statesmanship, in literature, in art, in science, in invention, in education, in agriculture, in manufacture. You were our wise and sympathetic teacher. If we have been apt pupils and have increased the sum of what you have given us, it awakens in you only a sense of pride and satisfaction, for we are joint sharers in the honor and glory that come to either.

We live today in retrospect. We gladly survey the past, with its mighty achievements, its immeasurable contributions to human progress, but we can not live alone in retrospective contemplation.

At the close of this memorable day, we shall turn our faces to the future. We shall plan and toil until the celebration of the three hundredth anniversary of the birth of Lancaster. What shall those speak who shall then assemble here? There is no vision so penetrating that it can see far in advance of the present hour. There is no seer with wisdom profound enough to open to us the mystic volume of the next fifty years. We are not filled with anxiety as to the half century which lies immediately before us. Hope tells us to look up, not down. She tells us that if we but carry into the future the work and the faith of the fathers, we shall surely go forward, expanding in knowledge and power, and that the roots of our institutions will strike deeper and still deeper into the affections of the people, and that through the united efforts of the East and the West, the North and the South, blended into one sublime word, "America," our primacy will be established and everywhere acknowledged, and that in the future, as in this hour, our chief glory will be that wisdom, justice and mercy will preside over us and the destiny of the great republic.

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